

### 3. SEX TRAFFICKING IN NEPAL

- Bishnu Sapkota<sup>3</sup>

#### Abstract

*Extreme poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, poor law enforcement, and open border between India and Nepal are major factors for human trafficking. Due to the devastating earthquake that hit Nepal on April 25, 2015, which was followed by more than 400 aftershocks, about 3 million people were victimized. The earthquake victims- women and children, were more vulnerable to trafficking than before. Hence, it is vital to understand human trafficking, its form, factors, effects, and motives. The objective of this paper is to make intellectuals aware of the issue of sex trafficking, problems, and possible solutions in Nepal.*

**Keywords:** *Sex trafficking, human rights, social welfare.*

#### Introduction

Attention has been drawn towards this issue and several countries have signed a United Nations protocol that attempts to recognize and define all types of trafficking (Hennick & Simkhada, 2004). This corporate effort indicates the growing concern among governments and therefore may serve as a springboard for amendments in legislations that may help in putting a check on this vice. Furthermore, this effort has potentially served as a tool in international cooperation to criminalize trafficking and protecting the victims. Although such significant efforts have been made to limit the rise of this evil, there still remains a lot to be known and perhaps additional awareness to be spread. "In the absence of conceptual clarity, it is difficult to distinguish between migration, forced labor and trafficking, making it difficult to assign responsibilities and duties to any one authority or organization". Thus, it is evident that there is not yet a scientifically clear concept of human trafficking which is causing difficulty in delegating responsibilities and authorities in order to solve problems related to sex trafficking. Furthermore, due to the confusion of terms and concepts between sex trafficking and migration, there are challenges in intervention and socio-economic lives of the women in Nepal. Nepal government banned even legitimate labor migration to Gulf countries for women and girls because of the presumption that they will become victims of sexual exploitation. As a result of it, there are negative impacts on the socio-economic standard of women and girls in Nepal. It is to this end that this paper makes its contribution particularly focusing on sex trafficking as it pertains to Nepal in its current condition. The paper may be helpful for the scholars, policy makers, potential victims, and agencies fighting against sex trafficking phenomenon specifically in Nepal. A fair strategies and well-defined review can make a great contribution in theory, practice, and policy formation. The sensitive nature of the problem, methodological issues in research aimed at exploring the concept continues to exist. Regardless, both empirical and non-empirical research studies have been published in journals. This paper seeks to add to the understating of the dimensions of sex trafficking in Nepal and in so

3 Mr. Sapkota is an MPhil student at Graduate school of Education, TU and teaches at Janabha-wana Campus

doing hopes to create awareness of the nature of the vice and, perhaps, the urgency to put a halt on this evil phenomenon in the discussed context.

Even though slavery has been banned centuries ago its practice continues in various forms. Looking through the lens of modern societies, human trafficking would replace slavery. A lot of literature has been gravitated towards women and children exploitation sexually as being victims of the vice. Nonetheless, modern day slavery is evident in our very own communities and domestic societies. It is also quite shocking that this is not limited by age or gender. Trafficking as we know it today was earlier described as the forceful recruitment of individuals and their enslavement.

Nepal has to focus on solutions and prevention measures for sex trafficking as there are tremendous negative effects on victims mentally, socially, physically, and economically nationwide. Sex trafficking does not only causes problems for victims but also local, national, and international community. In this respect, UNODC fully recognizes the importance of mobilizing the support of NGOs, IGOs, governments and the community at large. There are some feasible and viable solutions and prevention measures that could be applied. They are listed and explained herewith.

Sex trafficking especially women and children is a major issue in South Asia, particularly in Nepal. "It is estimated that about 200,000 Nepali women and children who are trafficked and sold into India, over the period of years, are working as forced prostitutes in brothels in different parts of India" (Datta, 2005). Many of these Nepali women and children are sold for the purpose of sexual exploitation and monetary profit. Sex trafficking is a growing concern as it is connected with human right violation and steady spread of HIV/AIDS (Kaufman & Crawford, 2011).

## **Discussions**

### **a. Equal Employment Opportunity**

One of the major reasons of sex trafficking that occurs in Nepal is because of lack of employment opportunity. When there is no options left for their livelihood, women and children are easily enticed and deceived by traffickers by assuring well paid jobs and socio-economic wellbeing. It is very crucial for women and girls to be trained in vocational skills, educate them well, and provide equal opportunities for employment in Nepal in order to prevent from sexual exploitation (Simkhada, 2008).

### **b. Care and Support**

The trafficked victims should be provided with counseling, medical care, and as well as should be trained for income generating skills. These kinds of rehabilitation programs will inspire victims to live happy and healthy lifestyles. Due to the male dominant culture and traditional ways of people in Nepal, trafficked women are not well accepted in some cases. So, they should be provided with some kind of jobs for their living and find marriage partners for their happy family lives (Kaufman & Crawford, 2011).

### **c. Eradication of Poverty**

There should be well strategic plan in National level to eradicate extreme poverty in Nepal. Providing viable livelihood options will contribute in fighting against sex trafficking in Nepal. The scarcity of foods, shelters, clothes, good health, and education compels victims to be persuaded by traffickers. Therefore, there is a vital need of eradicate poverty in order to combat sex trafficking in Nepal (Datta, 2005).

### **d. Law Enforcement**

There should be enforcement of strong law that fights against sex trafficking in Nepal. There should be effective law implementation that detect and discipline traffickers in a way that they never repeat the same immoral acts again. There should be NGOs, INGOs, and government agencies that offer supports and advocate for survivors of sex victims. So that the sexually exploited women and children are able to appreciate their life and encouraged to live a happy live.

### **e. Human Right**

There should be equal rights between men and women. All kinds of discrimination for women and children should be rooted out. Even though there is the existence of framework in the constitution to prevent and suppress trafficking activities, it is not seen in the practice in Nepal. Hence, every women and children of Nepal should be protected by law and in practice in terms of human rights issues.

### **f. Open Border**

The open border between India and Nepal is good in many ways. On the other hand, criminals are misusing the opportunity to pass the border freely and carrying out activities of injustice and sexual exploitation. Hence, agencies such as NGOs, INGOs, and government should be active to dictate such illegal and immoral phenomenon and prevent Nepalese women and children from sexual exploitation, crime and injustice.

### **g. Social Media**

Media can play a vital role for combating sex trafficking activities in Nepal. Nepali media should play a role to make aware of existing policies, law, forms, factors, problems, and solutions of sex trafficking in Nepal (Datta, 2005). "Utilising the local and national media will not only raise awareness of sex trafficking amongst the community, but can play an important advocacy role in sensitizing policymakers to the issues of sex trafficking" (Henink & Simkhada, 2004). It was reported that majority of Nepali women and children learn from media. Thus, media is important for raising awareness about factors, consequences, and solutions of sex trafficking.

## Conclusion

Unfortunately for lack of a proper definition it wasn't possible to legislate and to curb the vice. Significant efforts had been and are presently being made to manage sex trafficking, but still these evil acts continue to thrive. Sadly, more economically stunted countries like Nepal suffer the consequences of being source and transit destinations for trafficking of any nature, much worse for sexual exploitation. It was the purpose of this paper to put together the nature of sex trafficking in Nepal. Particularly, it discussed the factors leading to it, the consequences, and the solutions. Just like all research, this one too has inherited limitations. One limitation that must be borne in mind is that the data were essentially primary sources and were subject to the judgment of the researchers. The other limitation is that the methodology was limited to a narrative review as opposed to a more data based scientific one. Factoring in the purpose of the study, this study paints a picture of sex trafficking as it pertains to Nepal.

## References

- Barrows. J. & Finger R. (2008). Human Trafficking and the Healthcare Professional. *Southern Medical Journal*. 101, 521-524.
- Datta, P. (2005). Nepali female migration and trafficking. *Journal of Social Science*, 11(1), 49-56.
- Hennink, M., & Simkhada, P. (2004). Sex trafficking in Nepal: context and process. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 13(3), 305-338.
- Kaufman, M. R., & Crawford, M. (2011). Research and activism review: Sex trafficking in Nepal: A review of intervention and prevention programs. *Violence Against Women*, 17(5), 651-665
- Simkhada, P. (2008). Life histories and survival strategies amongst sexually trafficked girls in Nepal. *Children & Society*, 22(3), 235-248.